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1 Corinthians

WALKING **RIGHT SIDE UP** IN AN **UPSIDE DOWN** WORLD

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THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE – PART 1

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1

Notice that the proper context here is spiritual gifting.

- *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love** . . .” **GOD’S LOVE, AGAPE***
- Ultimately, this is the one thing to do, to say, to be, to act out, to rest in, to look like—**AGAPE LOVE. John 13:31-35**
- If we replace God’s name with one word, **LOVE** is the only word that really describes His character, attributes, personality, and nature in a single word. **1 John 4:7-11**

LOVE: THE ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL GIFT

- In **Chapter 12**, Paul shows the Corinthians' lack of love in using spiritual gifts. **Chapter 13** defines real love and **Chapter 14** shows how real love works.
- Love is actually more important than all the other spiritual gifts exercised in the church body. Love is the ***most excellent way*** Paul spoke of in **1 Cor. 12:31**.
- Love connects every act we undertake with God's great purposes and makes our actions and gifts useful for His kingdom.

DEFINING LOVE

First, we must recognize this love is not the world's love!

- We say we love money, cars, food, dogs, cats, sunsets, Disneyland, sports, television, dolphins, redwoods, etc.
- Sexual desire/lust has, in many cases, supplanted real love. Or, simply having a deep desire for virtually anything can be called love.
- Love is not a selfish desire to please yourself.
- Love is not chemistry or a response to your DNA.

REAL LOVE IS NOT SELFISH

- Visual or physical stimulation, infatuation, touch, a kiss, even sex in and of itself is not total love. Sex in marriage is part of the totality of love, but divorced from the marriage covenant, sex is far from real love.

Evolution cannot explain God's agape love.

- If man is simply a product of evolution, wouldn't we be working against evolution by loving unconditionally, preferring others, and caring for the disadvantaged?

THE CROSS IS THE PERFECT PICTURE OF REAL LOVE, AGAPE.

FOUR GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE

1. ***STORGE*** actually means *affection*, but is sometimes translated as *love*; love for relatives or family.
2. ***EROS*** love is known as *erotic love*; it is based on strong physical feelings toward another person.
3. ***PHILOS*** love is based on the deepest kind of friendship between two people.
4. ***AGAPE*** is unconditional love, self-sacrificing love, transcendent love, all-consuming love; love that is willing and ready, if necessary, to die for its object.

AGAPE, THE SUPREME LOVE

- ***AGAPE*** love is above ***STORGE***, ***PHILOS***, and ***EROS*** love.
- It is a love that is totally selfless, where a person gives out love to another person even if this act does not benefit her/him in any way.
- This highest type of ***AGAPE*** love is not human at all, but divine—God's unconditional love for us, His children—and now we model it back.
- **1 Cor. 13:4-8** provides a nearly perfect description for agape which we will get to as we study this chapter.

THE WHOLE AGAPE PICTURE

- In essence, ***EROS*** love is physical; ***PHILOS*** love is mental; and ***AGAPE*** love is spiritual.
- The perfect marriage is made up of all three with agape in the lead!
- Agape is made up of the three fundamental components of man: physical, mental, and spiritual.